

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

EMS professionals may be currently competent, but may find it a challenge to keep up with changes in field practice and emergency medicine. Continuing education must be designed to keep up with constant changes in practice to reduce the risk of EMS providers becoming outdated in skills and knowledge. "Information is not static; perpetual change is the norm" (Dubin, 1977)

Life long learning is essential for continued acquisition of knowledge and skills required to maintain competency in practice. In order for continuing education to be considered relevant, a needs assessment should be conducted. The goal of a needs assessment is to:

- Determine specific knowledge and performance areas that can be improved with education
- Convey changes in policies and scope of practice
- review and reinforce previous knowledge and psychomotor skills
- Provide new information
- Demonstrate new skills and equipment that will be introduced into the field.

Conducting a needs-assessment may include the following:

1. Survey, involve and review various resources:
 - Involve the Quality Improvement section to share information about performance areas that require improvement
 - Review EMS reports and tapes
 - Survey EMS Agency for changes in scope of practice and policy updates
 - Survey EMS supervisors or paramedic coordinators
 - Survey MICNs, and emergency department nurses and physicians
 - Survey course participants
 - Review medical literature for new trends
 - Survey customers (community, emergency department nurses, physicians and special interest groups)
2. Prioritize the results from the needs assessment conducted.
3. Establish specific objectives and content for the program.
4. Review/revise existing curricula or develop curricula as needed.